

Pam. Cary
Biog.

The Power of a Noble Life.

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BY CHARLES A. YOUNG.

President Pendleton has closed his eyes on earth to open them in heaven. Just one year before he fell "asleep in Jesus" he wrote a beautiful tribute to the noble life of John B. Cary. It began with these words; "Colonel John Baytop Cary was born near Hampton, Virginia, October 18, 1819, and died January 13, 1898, in Richmond, Va. These facts have been noted several times before, and several worthy sketches have been given us of his life, but such lives deserve to be held up in frequent remembrance, that the power of their nobility may brood upon the face of our souls till they are quickened into like forms of beauty and manliness." Yes, such a noble life as Col. Cary lived deserves to be held up in frequent remembrance, that the power of its nobility may quicken our souls into higher, holier endeavor in serving the Savior he loved so loyally and followed so faithfully.

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time."

May the power of Col. Cary's noble life fill our minds with larger visions of God, duty and immortality, and thrill our hearts with deeper sympathy for struggling humanity, while we consider the power of his noble life on earth, the power he is now exercising through the lives of those he inspired with noble purposes and the power he will continue to exert through the Bible teaching his wisdom and generosity fostered at the University of Virginia.

The life of Col. Cary was extraordinary, both in the quality and the variety of noble elements which made it such a power for good.

1. He had a noble ancestry.—The blood of a long line of brave, libertyloving men and pious Christian women flowed in his veins and leaped from his large, warm heart to his active finger tips. "He could not wear their name and hear the echo of their fame as it lived in the praise of a great and grateful people, and not feel inspired by their example to 'live nobly.'"

Colonel Cary's grandfather, for whom he was named, died early in life, but his grandmother, whose home was with his father, Col. Gill Armistead Cary, until her death, was a noble type of the Christian womanhood of Virginia, "a friend and connection of Martha Washington, and a

woman of marked personality." Doubtless her Christ like character and fervent prayers had an abiding, though unconscious influence on her eldest grandson—the power of whose noble life we are considering. A great teacher was asked by a thoughtful mother: "When should a child's training begin, to secure the noblest results in character?" His wise answer was, "A hundred years before the child is born." Back of Col. Cary's noble life was a hundred years and more of noble ancestry. Parents, let the power of his noble life inspire you to live nobly, that your posterity may "rise up and call you blessed," and follow in the footsteps of Him who has been your guide and goal.

2. In addition to a noble, pious ancestry, Col. Cary was himself highly gifted. He was naturally built upon a noble mold, physically, intellectually and morally—brave and energetic, broad and deep, high in his aims and unswerving in his integrity. "When we follow his life through its long journey, its high responsibilities, its arduous labors, its perilous dangers, its agonizing personal sufferings, its sad bereavements, and see him never faltering, never complaining, never discouraged nor daunted, but standing full-breasted against every foe, and rising ever upward to his high mark of duty and of service, who shall not feel how nobly he ranks among the great and good of the earth?" To quote President Pendleton again: "A born leader from his youth up, there was no interest, public or private, (and I will add educational or religious), in the communities in which he lived, wherein there was good to be done or wrong to be righted, in which his indomitable energy, his strong will-power and his love for his fellow-man were not conspicuous. The members of the Executive Committee of the C. W. B. M. who attended the National Convention which met at Indianapolis in October, 1897, will cherish to their dying hour the memory of the tall, manly figure, the noble bearing and Christian courtesy of Col. Cary, as he stood for the last time in our national councils, pleading for the permanent establishment of the Bible teaching at the University of Virginia, and generously pledging his moral and financial support to that important enterprise.

Col. W. Gordon McCabe, when accepting a portrait of Col. Cary, on behalf of the R. E. Lee Camp of Confederate Veterans, paid this beautiful tribute to the variety and quality of his native characteristics: "As a school master he was, in my deliberate judgment, one of the foremost, not only of his own time, but of any time—worthy a place by the side of Arnold, of Rugby. * * * But though like Arnold his tastes were primarily those of a scholar, he was a keen politician, and a man of deep

and uncompromising convictions touching the great questions which agitate our country. * * * As a public spirited citizen, he illustrated in the activities of a strenuous and blameless life that aphorism of a great English thinker, that 'the reward of one duty is the power to fulfill another.' Thinking of him—of his noble gentleness, his generous sympathies, his high courage, his Christian humility, his almost womanly unselfishness—I recall the lines on the great Lord Fairfax:

"Both sexes' virtues were in him combined:
He had the fierceness of the manliest mind,
And all the meekness, too, of womankind.
He never knew what envy was, nor hate.
His soul was filled with worth and honesty,
And with another thing besides, quite out of date,
Called modesty."

The many-sidedness of this noble life is one explanation of its increasing power.

3 The power of this noble life was augmented by broad and liberal culture. Col. Cary had a fine classical education. He had entered William and Mary College at seventeen years of age, and graduated from that time-honored institution, the Alma Mater of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and other great men, 1839. He kept up his classical studies and read his Greek New Testament with constant delight to the end of his life. But "the teacher is doubly taught," and for many years Col. Cary was one of the leading educators of the South. During the later years of his life the breadth of his culture grew with time. Not only did many of the best papers and magazines—political, scientific, religious and literary—receive a warm welcome in his home library, but these were carefully and discriminately read, after which they were wrapped with his own hand and sent to preachers and other persons. His broad sympathies brought him in contact with all classes of people, North and South. "In social life he represented all that was best and finest in the civilization of the 'Old South'—a civilization which, in its Christian piety, respect for woman, gracious manner, generous courage and unfailing courtesies was unique.

"And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,"

4. A noble ancestry, native ability and broad culture are of great value. But the power of this noble life was greatly augmented by the hardships he endured as a true soldier. It has been said of our dear Savior that "He wore all the crowns, even the crown of thorns."

"All common good has common price,
Exceeding good exceeding;
Christ bought the keys of paradise,
By cruel bleeding."

Every noble life, like the perfect life of the divine Man, is raised to a higher power, augmented in strength and deepened in sympathy by suffering. Col. Cary's life was one long, hard struggle—a "living sacrifice" for God and home, and native land—crowned, at last, with victorious success.

His struggles in life began early. He had scarcely reached man's estate when his father died, deeply involved in security debts. This noble young man not only cared for his mother and educated his younger brothers, but assumed all liabilities and paid every dollar of his father's indebtedness.

When the civil war broke out Col. Cary had one of the most delightful homes, and was the head of one of the most successful schools in the South. When the war closed he was homeless and penniless. "In 1844 he married Miss Columbia Hudgins, and for seventeen years life moved on in an even tenor of growth and success, amidst the sweet serenity of books and study and domestic happiness beside the blue waters of Hampton Roads. Here he built up a school which was aptly called the "Rugby of the South." But the time that tried men's souls was at hand. The prosperous and finely equipped school had to be dismissed. The town of Hampton was situated immediately under the guns of Old Point Comfort, so it was evacuated at the very beginning of the war, and a few months later burned to the ground, its citizens made homeless and penniless wanderers, among them, of course, the family of Col. Cary." Think of this heroic man turning from the ashes of his home and fortune, with a noble wife and five children to support, without any vindictiveness in his heart for the soldiers whose advance had destroyed the fruits of years of toil. Nor did he lose faith in God. His letters during the war read like those of Stonewall Jackson in their trust in God. Let the following extract from one of Col. Cary's letters, written shortly after the destruction of his property, witness to the strength of his faith and sympathy in the midst of his own struggles and voluntary separation from his loved ones:

"On yesterday, in conversation with a wounded officer who was taken prisoner by one of our scouting parties, he told me that he had played upon my piano; that it was in fine tune, and a very fine instrument. Poor fellow! When, in reply to a question from him how long he would be detained, I asked him if he had a family, a tear glistened in his eyes, as he spoke of his mother and sister. I could but pity him, for I, too, have a mother and wife and children, and I thought of their anguish if I, wounded, were in the hands of the enemy. But I never forget that I am in the hands of a merciful Father, and if it be

His will that I should suffer captivity, my faith will not be in the slightest impaired. Oh, hold fast to that faith, my loved ones! It elevates one so high above earth and earthly things, which, seen in its light, vanish into nothingness."

I shall not pain the hearts of the noble, sympathetic women, for whom this sketch of "the power of a noble life" is written, by passing in review the severe battles this cultured Christian gentleman had to fight to keep the wolf of want from the door of a refined family for years after the cruel war was over. The vicissitudes of this part of his life would have broken the spirit of a weaker man utterly. "But he was laid low. Antaeus-like, only to gather fresh strength for another conflict." He bided his time and God gave him the victory. At fifty-eight years of age—the age at which most men are losing their grasp of practical affairs—he was more active than ever. Beginning his business career anew, with untiring energy, an indomitable will, unswerving integrity and, above all, an abiding trust in God, the last twenty years of his life, which he devoted to building up the business of the Northwestern Life Insurance Company in Virginia and North Carolina, were years of uninterrupted success. He left a handsome estate, out of which Sister Columbia Cary, with the advice and consent of her son and daughters, has given ten thousand dollars to found the University of Virginia Bible Lectureship. While the struggle was long, the triumph of the last twenty years was glorious.

"The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."

5. The power of this noble life was greatly increased by his high regard for true Christian womanhood. In later life, when intimate friends congratulated him upon his success, he would tell with deep delight and sincerity of the gentle but strong influence his noble helpmate and soulmate had exerted on his life. She was the quiet power behind the throne from which he swayed the thoughts and lives of others. Sister Columbia H. Cary, who survives her noble husband, is still planning to widen the influence of his life. Dante, in his divine comedy, and other great poets, make woman the symbol of divine guidance in the way of salvation. Col. Cary was led to carefully read his Bible and consider the claims of Christ upon his heart and life by the sister of his wife. His regard for the wisdom and work of the Christian Woman's Board of Missions is well known, and in my last

conversation with him he said: "If I could only have the united support of the women of Virginia, I could soon endow a Bible Chair at our university." The power of his noble life is still guiding the thoughts and directing the purposes of his faithful life-companion and loving daughters. It still inspires the Christian women to greater efforts in firmly establishing the important work of Bible teaching at the seats of our great State universities.

We shall mention but one more influence which entered vitally into this noble life, so rich and varied, so gentle, yet so strong, to make it a power for good—His faith in God and his loyalty to Christ. He was reared in the aristocratic circles of the Episcopal communion, but when he became a Christian through independent investigation, he took his stand—a brave thing to do in those days—with the Disciples of Christ. His broad culture and gentlemanly instincts ever made him courteous to those who honestly differed with him in the various denominations, but the Restoration movement of the nineteenth century had no truer or grander representative. His name has become a household word not only in Virginia, but throughout the great brotherhood, a million strong, he loved so well. While he had many plans for Christian education during the last years of his life, he was especially interested in the establishment of a Bible Chair at the University of Virginia. He was also the friend of every worthy missionary enterprise. In this regard the mantle of this Christ-filled man has fallen on his son, Mr. T. Archibald Cary. This true son of a noble father, though very unassuming, is deeply interested in the education of the ministry, in foreign missions, the Bible work and every Christian work fostered by Col. Cary.

In the home, the church, the state, the nation, the power of this noble life continues to exert its Christian influence. He still lives in the lives and hearts of those he loved.

"He is not dead, but sleepeth! Well we know
The form that lies to-day beneath the sod
Shall rise what time the golden bugles blow,
And pour their music through the courts of God.
"And there amid our great heroic dead,
The war-worn sons of God, whose work is done,
His face shall shine as they with stately tread,
In grand review sweep past the jasper throne."

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